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Translanguaging and English-African language mother tongues as linguistic dispensation in teaching and learning in a black township school in Cape Town

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Abstract

Drawing on the notion of translanguaging, I show how learners in a Black township secondary school in Cape Town use their multilingual repertoire to achieve power, agency and voice. I use the conceptualisation of the prototypical pedagogical macrogenre from systemic functional linguistics to show how translanguaging can be used strategically to actualise regulative and instructional registers to engender teaching and learning in multilingual contexts, and to illustrate that the often-assumed “chaos” in translanguage discourse can be harnessed to engender pedagogic discourse. I demonstrate that by using the extended linguistic repertoire, learners do not need to be competent in monoglot English to be involved in classroom interactions and learning, as the Xhosa-English translanguage discourses provide the co(n)texts on which the “standard” English texts are consumed and produced. The article concludes with a thesis for language education policy that puts translanguaging at the centre of classroom practice in multilingual South Africa: it provides a new avenue for postcolonial learning/teaching, as it frames the learners’ cognition of content and ability to construct meaningful texts in familiar cultural and sociolinguistic contexts.

Keywords: translanguaging; multilingualism; policy; register; African mother tongues

Introduction

This article explores multilingual pedagogic discourse practices in a Black school in Cape Town, South Africa. The other school types in South Africa are referred to as former Whites only, former Coloured and former Indian schools. The specific focus is on how multilingual learners use their linguistic repertoires to engage in academic tasks to achieve academic excellence. Of particular interest is the teaching and learning of English content through an African language and/or an African language-English translingual amalgamated linguistic dispensation. I conceive English and African language mother tongues as constituting a multidimensional linguistic continuum, rather than as differentiated and autonomous systems.

In the article, I contend that language education policy and practice in South Africa need to consider translanguaging as a legitimate interactional practice in classroom discourse in schools. This would take advantage of the multilingual language practices of learners and teachers alike. This is particularly the case with Black learners who find that they cannot always use their extended linguistic repertoire for academic purpose owing to the monolingual orientation in language education policy. Specifically, I use classroom practice data to show how a teacher and learners at a Black school in Cape Town, South Africa, used translanguaging as a strategy to transcend conceptual and linguistic constraints in an English language class. In exploring the benefits of the multilingual linguistic practices, I use Christie's (1997, 2001, 2002, 2005) conceptualisation of the prototypical pedagogical macrogenre (Curriculum Initiation^Curriculum Collaboration^Curriculum Closure) to show how translanguaging can be used strategically to actualise regulative and instructional registers to engender teaching and learning in multilingual contexts. The regulative register refers to language choices designed to establish goals for teaching–learning activities, and to foster and maintain the direction of the activities until their achievement; while the instructional register refers to language choices related to actual content, that is, the knowledge and realisation of associated skills being taught (Christie, 2001, 2002, 2005). It is possible to use Xhosa or Xhosa-English to regulate and predispose the learners and English (or English-Xhosa) for instructional purposes. I maintain that the notion of pedagogic macrogenres with contrastive regulative and instructional registers playing a critical role offers an avenue in which the often-assumed “chaos” in translanguage (multilingual) discourse can strategically be exploited to engender pedagogic discourse. The concept of pedagogic discourse is borrowed from Bernstein's sociolinguistic theoretical framework (1990, 1996, 2000) and genre theory in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) tradition (Christie, 2001, 2002; Christie & Martin, 1997; Halliday, 1994; Martin, 1992). The concept is useful in that it enables the study of the patterns of language use in classrooms as a form of “pedagogic discourse.”

Conceptualising multilingualism and the monolingual ideology in South Africa

At a time when in Africa people necessarily speak at least two languages (an African language and a colonial language) as a necessity, arguments for a singular “mother tongue” education are out of place. Yet, the literature is awash with repeated arguments about the benefit of “mother tongue” only education in South Africa and Africa generally (see, for overviews, Banda, 2009, 2010; De Klerk, 1996, 2000). In South Africa, the mother tongue in the singular is seen as the panacea for poor education in Black townships in particular. In reality, however, language choice is one of the many problems besieging education delivery in former non-white schools. These include lack of teaching material, overcrowding, gangsterism, union involvement [unions refuse any suggestions of revamping the education system after years of apartheid neglect], the inherited apartheid legacy of poor school management and the apartheid architecture of infrastructure in which Black schools are often found at the fringes of modern society, with some still lacking computers and libraries (Banda, 2004). The 1953 UNESCO declaration that the mother tongue should be the

mainstay of education was commendable at the time. It was believed people lived in self-contained communities speaking one language – the mother tongue. People were thought to have a singular identity, which was directly linked to the mother tongue. A loss of the mother tongue was thought to mean a loss of a people's culture and identity. On the basis of this, mother tongue education was linked to human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), while the rise of English as a global language of education has been likened to linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009).

However, even before Europeans came to Africa, the nature of African society in which people moved from one area to another in pursuit of new land for farming, grazing for cattle, trade and also due to wars of conquest means that language contact and multilingualism are not entirely new to the continent. The European (and Arab) influences only added different (colonial and religious) dimensions to the linguistic situation in Africa (Banda, 2016, 2009). The click sound in the first syllable in Xhosa [amaXhosa refers to people; isiXhosa refers to the language. I use Xhosa without the prefix to refer to the language speakers throughout as is the convention in English] and a vast amount of click sounds found in a number of Bantu languages are indicative of the language contact between the Bantu people and the Khoisan people. Thus, the linguistic phenomenon of multilingualism predates the arrival of Europeans and Arabs into Africa.

The European and Arab sojourns and subsequent urbanisation in Africa only helped to accelerate multilingualism and linguistic diversity whose roots were already in place. Brock-Utne (2009), Banda (2009, 2010) and Mc Laughlin (2009) have argued that most Africans acquire first, second, third, etc., languages at the same time. As Banda (2010) notes, they do not often distinguish them as first, second, third, etc., languages because they grow up learning and speaking them as an integrated linguistic repertoire. Second, from an African perspective, and the increasingly urbanising Africa contexts in which languages are mostly acquired at the same time in non-formal circumstances and not consecutively, the idea of first, second, third, etc., languages is alien and does not make sociolinguistic sense.

Although on paper there appears to be increasing recognition about the need to nurture and promote multilingualism in Africa, such sentiments are often based on a monoglot/monolingual understanding of multilingualism. Multilingualism is seen as a case of multiple monolingualisms (Banda, 2009, 2010; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009, 2014; García & Wei, 2014). In this monoglossic conceptualisation, being multilingual is seen as incremental in the case of “adding” languages or “subtracting” languages (see Banda, 2009, 2010).

In this regard, some literature in South Africa has proposed what is called mother tongue-based multilingual education (see Alexander, 2005 for some studies). The model has been taken up and has been proposed for the Philippines. Focusing on Asia, the Philippines in particular, Malone (2007, p. 1) notes that mother-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE) is defined in two ways: (1) “the use of students’ mother tongue and two or more additional languages as Languages of Instruction (LoI) in school”; and (2) “to describe bilingual education across multiple language communities – each community using their own mother tongue plus the official school language for instruction.” In both scenarios, the languages involved are separated and used in parallel or dual/multiple medium streams, rather than as a singular linguistic repertoire. Similarly, notions such as mother tongue

multilingualism as used by for example Mohanty (2009, 2007) are useful in as far as there is recognition that children may speak two or more languages as mother tongues. However, the models are transitional in that they are premised on initial learning/ teaching in a mother tongue before transitioning to a regional language or former colonial language (usually English, French or Portuguese).

In South Africa, additive bilingualism is premised on 6–7 years of primary education in the mother tongue before switching to English or Afrikaans as the sole language of education.

The African mother tongue is discarded altogether or becomes an (optional) additional (language) subject. In terms of classroom practice, this effectively means monolingual/ monoglot mother tongue practices being replaced by monolingual/monoglot English practices (Banda, 2009, 2010). I conceptualise bi/multilingual education as one in which two or more languages are used to teach content such as science, geography and mathematics, and not merely as other language subjects (cf. Baetens-Beardsmore, 1992; Banda, 2010).

Similarly, although multilingualism is recognised in the South African constitution through the Bill of Rights (South African Constitution Act No. 108, 1996), the notion is perceived as recognising 11 autonomous languages as official. Other than English (and to some extent Afrikaans), which enjoy national prestige, African languages such as Xhosa, Tswana and Zulu are mostly confined to certain regions. The promotion of multilingualism is thus at best the promotion of regional or province-based multiple monolingualisms (Banda, 2009, 2010). The Provincial Western Cape Government (1997) institutions and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED, 2007) under which the school in which the article is based have adopted additive bilingualism as the governing language education policy.

The monolingual ideology is evident in the WCED (2007) language education policy document on what it calls mother tongue-based bilingual education: “the mother tongue is used for learning and an additional language is gradually added and strengthened to the point where it could be the LOLT after a period of say 6 years” (WCED, 2007, p. 4). Similarly, the South African language in education policy (1997) advocates the development and promotion of additive bilingualism through the home language of learners. Clearly, the assumption is that the learners have one language in the home and the other languages are seen as separate but which can be “added.” This helps to normalise both the monolingual ideology and a bounded notion of language.

Translanguaging as linguistic dispensation in classroom practice

Following recent conceptualisation of language as a social practice, in which languages are not seen as countable and autonomous systems (Heller, 2007; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2010), and particularly translanguaging as pedagogic discourse (García, 2009, 2014; García & Wei, 2014; Williams, 1994), I defer to “translanguaging” rather than “codeswitching.” First, translanguaging has been theorised as “the purposeful pedagogical alternation of languages in spoken and written, receptive and productive modes” (Hornberger & Link, 2012, p. 262). The purposive nature of the practice means teachers and learners use their extended linguistic repertoire as normal classroom practice free of

retributions. Second, I see translanguaging as a novel approach quite different from the monolingual/monoglot-biased code-switching. In this regard, it is informative as Hornberger and Link (2012, p. 263) state that code-switching “tended to focus on issues of language interference, transfer or borrowing;” while (García, 2009, p. 51) adds, “translanguaging ‘shifts the lens from cross-linguistic influence’ to how multilinguals ‘intermingle linguistic features that have hereto been administratively or linguistically assigned to a particular language or language variety.” Third, the work of García (2009, 2014), García and Wei (2014) and Canagarajah (2001), in particular, on Tamil-English bilingual learners has shown how learners transcend the limitations imposed by the Tamil only and English only ideology through strategic translanguaging. Canagarajah (2001, p. 210) concludes the learners were able to gain “sufficient agency...[to enable] them resist policies that contribute to symbolic domination.” This study is therefore a contribution that showcases how translanguaging enables learners in a school in South Africa resist symbolic domination by English monoglot/monolingual norms. It also shows how translanguaging provides a novel way in which multilingual learners can achieve voice, power and agency in classroom practices designed to bridge home- and school-based literacy practices.

Sociolinguistic context of study area

Data for this article were obtained from an on-going larger project on multilingual literacy practices in Black and Coloured schools in Cape Town. Six research assistants collected data from 8 Black township schools (4 Primary and 4 Secondary schools), and 8 coloured schools (4 Primary and 4 Secondary schools) on the Cape Flats, in Cape Town. The data have yielded large amounts of observation notes, audio and video recordings of classroom practices and interviews with teachers and learners. Focus for this particular article is on multilingual classroom practices in a Grade 10 English language class in one of the many secondary schools in Khayelitsha, a Black township on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. I am calling it a “Black” township to distinguish it from areas designated for “White” and “Coloured” (mixed race) people respectively during apartheid. The demographics of these areas have not changed much in post-apartheid era. Townships such as Mitchell’s Plain and Grassy Park are still predominantly Coloured areas, while Khayelitsha, Langa, Gugulethu and Philippi (to name a few) are predominantly Black areas.

Khayelitsha is the second largest Black township in South Africa after Soweto in Johannesburg, and the largest in Cape Town. It is the fastest growing township in South Africa with people coming mainly from the Eastern Cape Province, and also from other provinces and countries. The latest census statistics indicate that 90.54% of people in Khayelitsha claimed Xhosa as their first language followed by English 3.22%, and the rest is made up of “Other,” Afrikaans, Sesotho, Zulu and other South African official languages. Demographically, more than 98% are classified as Black (African), while Coloured, White, Indian and “Other” make up the rest (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2011). The idea to build Khayelitsha was mooted by Piet Koornhof in 1983, the apartheid era Minister of Co-operation and Development. The area known then as Site C became established as Khayelitsha by 1985. It initially had about 30,000 inhabitants. As of 2011, the population of Khayelitsha had grown to 391,749, with the following demography: 90.5% Black African,

8.5% Coloured and 0.5% White (Stats SA, 2011). Since census data only indicate what people responded to the question of what their first language was, it does not capture the extent of multilingualism in the study area.

In determining the extent of monolingualism or multilingualism in Black Townships, one also needs to consider that although there are some programmes on radio and television in Xhosa, English programmes dominate media so that the majority of programmes children listen to on the radio or watch on TV are in English. At the same time, although exposure to English does not necessarily translate into proficiency in the language, the argument remains that children and adults are exposed to English in urban townships 202 F. BANDA such as the one under study. When census statistics, or educators say that Black children do not speak English at home or that they have difficulties comprehending English lessons, it should not necessarily be taken to mean that the communities they come from or that these children are completely monolingual. Thanks to the colonial and apartheid legacy, adults are exposed to English (and some extent Afrikaans), the language(s) of the workplace and socioeconomic mobility. In any case, the learners of the school used in this study have had at least 10 years of formal education in English. The learners used in this study can therefore be characterised as at the very least bilingual (Xhosa and English), but some are multilingual as they take Afrikaans as a subject. Moreover, they either speak or do understand related Nguni family languages such as Zulu or Ndebele, to which Xhosa belongs.

In terms of the sociolinguistic situation in South Africa and Black communities such as Khayelitsha, a cursory look might suggest language shift to English (Anthonissen, 2009; Kamwangamalu, 2003; McCormick, 2002). However, what seems to be the case is that language contact and the advent of English as a language of global mobility, language practices have changed so that at home and in different domains, people readily deploy two or more languages at once in various combinations for their meaning potentials (Banda, 2010, 2009; McCormick, 2002; Paxton, 2009; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013). The sociolinguistic situation is therefore better described as depicting a multilingual situation rather than a case of language shift. Bits-and-pieces or entire chunks of African languages are not entirely lost as they are dispersed and dispensed in various combinations with English (and Afrikaans) across space and time. Stroud and Kerfoot (2013) note that some scholars (Banda, 2010; McCormick, 2002; Paxton, 2009) have argued that multilingual linguistic dispensation has become a language practice in homes in South Africa, and Cape Town in particular.

It is not surprising that there is growing literature in South Africa championing translanguaging as pedagogical discourse to engender and unlock the knowledge embedded in learners' multilingual repertoire (see Antia, 2015; Banda, 2010; Makalela, 2015a, 2015b; Mwindi & Van der Walt, 2015). Drawing from these studies, I shall assume that multilingual learners have an extended language repertoire drawn from their lived experiences. In turn, I assume that the learners draw on this language repertoire "to take control of their own learning, to self-regulate when and how to language, depending on the context in which they are being asked to perform" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 80). The flexibility in languaging practices as will be shown in this study enables the learners and teachers to demonstrate creativity and agency, which would be impossible to achieve in monolingual education contexts.

Indeed, regarding classroom discourse, some studies have shown the beneficial effects of multilingual linguistic practices in classrooms in South Africa. For instance, in South Africa, multilingual language practices have been shown to be beneficial for primary and secondary school teaching and learning of mathematics (Setati, 1998); science and English (Setati & Adler, 2000; Setati, Adler, Reed, & Bapoo, 2002) and Economics and Biology (Banda, 2010; Paxton, 2009). In other words, although the data from this article are based on one class, the translanguaging practices are common in multilingual South African schools, as is also seen in Setati and Adler (2000), Setati et al. (2002), Banda (2010), Stroud and Kerfoot (2013), Makalela (2015a, 2015b), Mwindi and Van der Walt (2015) and Antia (2015), to name a few studies.

The data used in this article were obtained through audio recording, observation, notes and interviews with the principal of the school and the teacher who taught the class involved in the study. Translations and transcriptions of audio recordings were done by a team of six research assistants, who themselves grew up and went to school in the Black townships and are familiar with Xhosa and other languages spoken in the area. The accuracy of the translations was double-checked by a linguistics lecturer and a postgraduate student, both of whom speak Xhosa and English and were not originally involved in the planning, execution and initial translations of the recordings. The teacher and all the learners in the class studied claimed to be from a Xhosa speaking background.

Translanguaging and pedagogical discourse analysis

Martin (1992) defines genre as a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage members of a particular culture. Based on this [SFL] formulation of genre, Christie (1997, 2001, 2002, 2005) proposes a model of classroom discourse analysis, which views classroom episodes as “curriculum genres,” some of which operate in turn as part of larger units called curriculum macrogenres. In illustrating how translanguaging operates differently from monolingual education, I draw on Christie’s (1997, 2001, 2002, 2005) pedagogical macrogenres in which regulative and instructional registers are instantiated. The first order or regulative register refers to sets of language choices which are principally involved in establishing goals for teaching–learning activities, and with fostering and maintaining the direction of the activities until their achievement; while the second order or instructional register refers to language choices in which the knowledge and associated skills being taught are realised (Christie, 1997). Thus, from Martin’s (1992) definition of genre, pedagogical macrogenres refer to the staged unravelling of classroom interaction. Christie (1997, 2001, 2002, 2005) describes the stages as Curriculum Instantiation^ Curriculum Collaboration^ Curriculum Closure. The ^ symbol represents a typical move in genre/text analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997). This model is similar to Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975, 1992) three move model of classroom interaction involving the Initiation^Response^Follow-up structure). In essence, both models have three moves: “beginning, middle, end.” The unfolding moves are reflected through various shifts in language use. I use Christie’s model as it allows for study of classroom interaction and patterns of language use in classrooms as a form of pedagogic discourse in which two registers are in operation. Moreover, the model allows for analysis of the unfolding moves as reflecting various shifts in language use. In this

study, it allows me to analyse the use of multiple languages and blended linguistic elements in the unfolding stages in pedagogic discourse. Therefore, although the model was originally conceived in English monoglot classroom practices, I use it to highlight strategic use of (forms of) multiple languages as pedagogical discourse across the macrogenres and registers in multilingual classroom contexts.

Translanguaging as transformative pedagogic discourse

The very idea that “mixing” languages helps learners with learning and acquiring new knowledge might not sit well with traditional pedagogical practices which are premised on using a singular language at a time and space for teaching and learning. At the same time, it is clear from the classroom practices of the school understudy that in terms of what Bernstein (1990, 1996, 2000) calls pedagogic discourse, that the delivery of the prototypical pedagogical macrogenre was accomplished through translanguaging. The classroom practice below clearly articulates Christie’s “overall pattern of prototypical model of a curriculum macrogenre” as in “Curriculum Initiation^ Curriculum Collaboration^ Curriculum Closure” (Christie, 2002, p. 100). In this overall pattern, “Curriculum Initiation” represents the opening genre, which establishes goals, and crucially predisposes the learners to work and think in particular ways. The middle genre elaborates on the work necessary towards achievement of the tasks. The Curriculum Closure represents the final genre, in which the task is completed. These stages as illustrated in this article may overlap and are done in more than one language to take advantage of learners’ multilingual linguistic dispositions.

Classroom context: Grade 10 English class

Observation notes

The female teacher said she is in her 30s, has a bachelor’s degree to teach English and has been a teacher for more than 10 years. She resides in Khayelitsha township. She says she speaks Xhosa, sometimes English or Xhosa-English “mix” at home and at school with learners and colleagues. The class has 35 learners (23 females and 12 males) ranging between 17 and 20 years in age, and they all claim to speak mostly Xhosa at home and also English or Xhosa-English “mix” with peers.

In terms of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 1996, 2000) and pedagogical macrogenre (Christie, 2002), turns 1–6 illustrate Curriculum Initiation being dominated by regulative register in which the goals of the lesson are outlined. Learners’ discourse is almost entirely in Xhosa, while the teacher mostly uses English and she adopts a conversational tone with the solidarity “we” construction in her discourse. The “we” construction functions to reduce social distance and reduce power differences between the teacher and the learners.

T1 L1 (Group 1): Hayi soyenza njani? [No how are we going to do it?]

- T2 T: Ok even if you don't write down the whole story, the person comfortable has to share the story with the speaker and the speaker will stand up and share it with class in English.
- T3 L2 (Group 6): Ndizobalisa ngesiya sethu sobayi two. [I am going to share this one with the two of us?].
- T4 T: Ayi, [No,] with your group first. It seems as if leaders are not taking leadership, not exercising what must be done, if the leader doesn't know, then you should ask me. If you want me to...
- T5 L2: [To teacher] Hayi mani susifakela i-story. Esingasifuniyo. [No don't narrate the story. We don't want.] We know what to do. We discuss first.
- T6 T: OK. Remember that we are still learning. I want you to get it right. I want you to try so at least we understand those words. Ok once you understand those words you would follow the story. Then work out your own short presentation on the word or phrase I've given you.

[Learners discuss the passages in isiXhosa and thereafter make their presentations in English].

Key: T1, T2,...= Turn 1, Turn2,...; L = Learner; T = Teacher

Observation notes

After introducing the lesson, the teacher meticulously arranges learners into groups. She seems to be taking her time about it – moving one student to one group, only to move him or her to another group. The teacher arranges learners into 7 groups of 5 to discuss a passage from a prepared text. The learners are told to re-interpret the passage and come with their own narratives focusing on the following terms/phrases: “courageous”, “mental strength”, “physical strength”, and “ability to endure”. After 5–8 minute group discussion a member of the group was expected to present to the class the group's re-interpretation in a recontextualised narrative. Each of the groups was allocated one term/phrase to work on and to orally present in English.

Blommaert (2016) has argued that multilinguals' linguistic skills are not just socially structured but also that their skills in critical components of language are not evenly distributed. The teacher deliberately designed the group dynamics to take advantage of the extended linguistic repertoires and differentiated skills of the learners. By re-arranging the groups, she re-aligned and undermined the learners' unevenly distributed linguistic skills. She effectively integrated the learners linguistic and academic strengths so as to minimise the weaknesses and as a result to maximise cognitive engagement with content for academic success. In this regard, each group had a *leader* who directed the discussion; *the discussants* made up of the whole group; *the scribes* who wrote down the meanings of “difficult” words and were also responsible for writing down in English the final presentation on their chosen word/phrase with the help of the group, and lastly, *the orator* responsible for reading the presentation of the reworked text to the rest of the class.

The significance of ensuring that each group had learners with different English composition/writing and/or spoken skills ensured that each learner had a particular role to play in the evolving classroom practice. That the teacher allowed the learners to use Xhosa, English and Xhosa-English blends in the evolving classroom practices, also ensured that knowledge of monoglot English norms, or lack of it, was not going to stand in the way of engaging with the content in the text and achieving the goals of the lesson. The teacher rearranging learners can be said to be part of Curriculum Initiation which extends and overlaps with Curriculum Collaboration, in which learners discuss and prepare for the presentation. As the teacher moves from one group to another, she reinforces the regulative register by reminding each group what they are supposed to do and focus on. She used translanguaged Xhosa and English to ensure that the learners understood what was expected. Learners on their part used mainly Xhosa and English-Xhosa repertoire in their group discussions.

It would seem from turn 1 that the learners are not clear about the teacher's instructions. The teacher's use of the word "share" appears to add to the confusion. The teacher uses the word twice. The second use should rather have been "present." The teacher extends the meaning of the word "share" to incorporate "discussion," especially in the first instance. In a way in turn 3, the learner questions the teacher's use of the word "share" without appearing to do so. The teacher in turn indirectly accuses the learner of not taking leadership of the group. Turn 5 shows that the learner already knew what the teacher wanted the class to do. In the final analysis, even though learner 2 is responding in Xhosa he appears to have knowledge of English, especially the difference between "sharing" and "discussing," and "sharing" and "presenting." However, with the teacher indirectly threatening to take over "leadership" of the group, the learner concedes the classroom power play.

The translanguaging practices in-group discussions, constituting the Curriculum Collaboration (Christie, 2002), brought out translation and interpretation skills in the learners. This meant that the meanings and understanding of the words and phrases (terminology) were achieved across linguistic boundaries. Translanguaging as seen above depicts a "responsive engagement with complex new forms of linguistic, social and racial diversity" (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013, p. 2). Allowing learners to draw on their various experiences and their linguistic repertoire empowers all learners to participate in the discussions and subsequent production of knowledge. In this regard, inability to speak in monoglot English or monoglot Xhosa was not a barrier to lively discussions that took place in the groups. English words and phrases were dissected for meanings while paragraphs were re-presented in Xhosa or Xhosa-English hybrid forms. In essence, the whole exercise showcased how learners in multilingual contexts can use new forms of multilingual linguistic competence in an integrated way to engage with cognitively demanding tasks and to produce new knowledge in the process.

The next sequence in pedagogic discourse can be said to be overlapping Curriculum Collaboration (teacher and learners engaging on aspects of presentation) and Curriculum Closure, in which case the presentation is deemed to be successfully presented, and thus the goal of the lesson is met (cf. Christie, 1997, 2002).

T7 T: Let's start with group 4.

- T8 L3 (Group 4): When I was 13 years old my father used to beat my mother every time when he was drunk. My mother did not go to the police because she loved her husband. She “endured” in that situation in the name of love.
- T9 T: It is clear, right class?
- T10 Ls: Yes.
- T11 T: Group 2.
- T12 L3 (Group 2): I want to say that “endurance” is what makes us human. If yesterday you “endured,” and tomorrow comes you are fine, you have “endured.” Every day there are challenges that come, you have to “Endure.”
- T13 T: Ok. “Courageous?” Yes, speaker, Group 5.
- T14 L4 (Group 5): You may be “courageous” at school or home, or maybe with the project that you join or perhaps mostly in the community or school work. For example even if the teacher says to me I am not serious with my books and I am not listening when the teacher is busy teaching the class; I am Ok because of hope and my confidence. I have told myself I will pass this grade and I will read my books and I am also going to listen when the teacher is busy teaching. I have “courage” to say that and believe in my abilities and myself.

It is interesting to note how learners have weaved their own unique experiences into the narratives. In Turn 8, for example, the learner uses gender-based violence against women as backdrop to explaining what enduring means. Women are sometimes known to endure years of abuse in the name of love. It is also the case that most of such violence is not reported to the police for fear of further or more serious repercussions from the abuser.

It is also noteworthy that Group 2 has transformed the story into a more or less philosophical exposition, while Group 5 links “courage” to confidence and abilities. What is captivating in the study so far is the transformation of texts resulting from discussions done in Xhosa, English and Xhosa-English linguistic dispensations, which are thereafter reworked into written “standard” English ready for oral presentation.

The use of translingual discourse does not necessarily mean that the speakers are completely oblivious to the formal monoglot norms. Indeed, in the classroom interactions under study, it became apparent that the learners and teacher could carry long stretches of dialogue in what can be said to be “Standard” English as illustrated below. It is easy to mistake the initial hesitation by the female learner presenter as indicative of her not having the vocabulary to express herself. However, the banter that takes place between the learners and the teacher suggests the interactants are able to carry a reasonable conversation in English. In terms of levels of formality, turns 15–23 have a more colloquial tone than turns 24–28. What is also interesting in the following pedagogic discourse is the emphasis on instructional register as the sequence moves from Collaborative to Curriculum Closure (Christie, 2002).

- T15 T: Group 7, physical strength?
- T16 L5: There were two students, a girl and boy = = =
- T17 T: There were there were...= = =
- T18 L5: Ok

- T19 T: One student but two...one student but two?
[The learner appears unsure about the teacher's interruption and how to respond to her.]
- T20 T: One student, one cow,... but two cows. One student but two....
- T21 Ls [Shout out]: Students!
- T22 L5: There were two students, a girl and a boy. They were arguing about a chair. The boy was saying it is his chair and the girl was saying the same.
[The class laughs]
- T23 T: What happened, because I know I am going to punish some people, now after this, what happened? [Teacher in jocular voice]
- T24 L5: [Continues]...and the girl was saying it was hers; they began to fight and because the boy is stronger than the girl, the boy won, and that is how they have showed their differences in physical strength.
- T25 T: Right. We said men are stronger physically. [Looking and pointing at some boys] You have got physical power and we know that you are stronger than me. In the story she was sharing (referring to the presenter of group 7) you find out the man - the boy won the fight not because the boy was right; maybe the chair belongs to the girl. Right?
- T26 Ls: Yes
- T27 T: So to apply physical strength it does not mean that you are right all the time. It is just like when you are arguing and you don't agree about certain point, as you are arguing you will find out that I have got more points than you. But then after that we fight and then you win the fight because of your physical strength. It does not mean you have got facts it only means that you have got physical strength but not facts.
- T28 Ls: Yes.

It is noteworthy the kinds of collaborative learning taking place in the above extract. In turn 21, the other learners help the presenter with logic and meaning making. In turn 22, the learners' laughter suggests they are aware of the ambiguity in the line: "The boy was saying it is his chair and the girl was saying the same." This also illustrates the danger of direct translation from Xhosa language. The teacher did not appear to be aware of the apparent contradiction, or had decided not to point it out, as this would impinge on the learner's confidence, and thus affect her presentation. The latter seems to be the case as the teacher cajoles the learner to continue with the presentation ("What happened."), and jokingly suggests she will punish those learners' trying to distract the presenter. This results in the learner gaining confidence and continuing with her narrative in more or less "standard" English. The learners' responses and teacher monologue are entirely in English in this stage unlike in the previous stage discussed above, where the learners in particular blended Xhosa and English.

In the dialogue above, the interaction between the teacher and the learners takes place entirely in English. Evidently, the learner had difficulty instantiating the story in English or was just shy (turn 16), but with the teacher's and other learners' prompting and teasing her along, she opens up into an English monologue. It is also interesting that the teacher and learners do not switch to Xhosa, as one would expect, to re-align the topic and their everyday

experiences and beliefs. In turns 25 and 27, the teacher uses English to recontextualise the learners' cultural knowledge and everyday experiences in which the male is thought to have more physical strength than the female. In a subtle way, this is also a socio-cultural critique or commentary by the teacher, in which she highlights how males use their physical strength to subdue females.

Starting turn 29, in advancing the instructional register, the teacher has to use English only to avoid a cultural taboo that forbids females discussing what happens at male initiation schools. From a cultural perspective, the female learner and the female teacher may not talk about certain issues related to male initiation, as it is in Xhosa culture the prerogative of the "initiated" (circumcised) males (Funani, 1990; Nkosi, 2005, 2013). This explains why the discussion is general, and relates to what is already out in the media and communities, and the teacher is careful to keep it like that, and not to claim she knows the specifics. The girl who did the presentation on behalf of the group appears to have also been well aware of the taboo. She started the presentation hesitantly and spoke in a low voice. The teacher is evidently well aware of the cultural taboo but navigates around it by teasing the boys ("men") and joking about her own lack of knowledge about what happens in male initiation schools. The teacher diffuses the tension and the female presenter's nervousness by humorously pointing at her own lack of knowledge in matters of male initiation, which involves circumcision. In multilingual contexts, the different linguistic choices carry different taboos and licences (Banda, 2005). In multilingual Africa, it is more palatable to use English in discussing genitalia than African languages, in which case it comes out as gross, insulting and disrespectful; and insults are less venomous in English than in African languages (Banda, 2005). During her study on gender and Xhosa male circumcision, Nkosi (2005) found that she was often denied access to information relating to the ritualised language and other specifics because as a woman she was an outsider. She notes that "One respondent thumped his fists on the table and shouted at me, stating that I should get a Xhosa circumcised male to conduct interviews on my behalf" (Nkosi, 2005, p. 29). In another incident, a man only agreed to be interviewed about Xhosa circumcision if the interviews were conducted in English, as "sex language" is "strong" and awkward when discussed in an African language (Nkosi, 2005, p. 26).

In the pedagogic discourse below, the use of English by the teacher enables her to avoid an awkward and embarrassing situation – a situation which she in turn uses to engender the instruction register whose goal is conducting a successful English oral presentation.

Group 1's presentation could not be clearly recorded as the female presenter was obviously uncomfortable with the topic and other learners (both male and female) sniggered and laughed at her discomfort during the presentation. In Xhosa culture, females and uncircumcised "boys" are not expected to discuss male circumcision and the rituals surrounding it. The teacher, on the other hand, took the opportunity offered by the topic to distinguish between the mental endurance of pain males undergo during circumcision, and physical strength. The linguistic choice of English is significant as it enables her to get away with a social taboo. The topic is "de-culturalised" as it becomes part of teaching and learning English a "foreign" language. This would be seen as transgression of cultural norms if Xhosa, a language associated with Xhosa culture, had been used. The female teacher appears to

enjoy the licence offered by English and even pretended not to know what happens during the process of circumcision.

T29 T [to female presenter]: Your group is assisting you; [focuses on the boys] so now I am listening from them. Ok, I cannot comment on that (circumcision) but I wanted you to make examples. Do you hear?

T30 L6: Yes.

T31 T: They are talking about circumcision, ok? So I cannot also relate to that because I was never there and I will never be there.

[Entire class laughs]

But it is a pity that I do not know what happens exactly [during circumcision], but I think there is something that is done to your body and you need to be strong ok? [Nervous laughter and giggles from learners]. Your example is very close to the point but it is not exactly the meaning of physical strength. If I have got physical strength I can deal with people against me I can push them because I am strong physically, so that is the meaning of physical strength. But now being in the pain, I am not quite sure it means physical strength. What do you think?

T32 Ls [Group 1]: To endure.

T33 T: Yes, it is endurance, it is endurance that you have shared but not physical strength. Ok when you look at wrestlers, wrestlers have got physical strength, ne, pulling down the table and the showing of physique. I am using physical strength. But what you have shared is endurance, because it has got something with overcoming pain. But at least you have tried.

The female teacher in “solidarity” comes to the rescue of the female learner who is coaxed by male members to present on what is culturally taboo. Solidarity with the female learner is seen in the line “I cannot also relate to that...” At the same time she seems to blame the males in the group rather than the female member for giving an incorrect answer. The line “Your group is assisting you” is thus ironic, as the group has not assisted the female learner. They have selected an illustration using a topic females are not supposed to partake in. Instead of dropping the topic, the female teacher whimsically pretends she does not know anything about what happens during the initiation rites; at the same time, she uses available cultural knowledge to make clear the subtle difference between mental endurance and physical strength. Group 1 had confused endurance of pain that “boys” need to undergo to become “men” with physical strength. Thus, the teacher seizes the opportunity offered by the taboo topic to teach English concepts, mental endurance and physical strength. The teacher using English during the discussion of the topic of circumcision also helps her avoid words and phrases that would sound offensive and inappropriate if Xhosa was used. The use of irony and humour by the teacher also helps her to defy social roles but at the same time not to appear culturally offensive (cf. Banda, 2005).

It can be said, therefore, that translanguaging is not merely about language mixing and using of bit-and-pieces of language, it is also about infusing local knowledge systems and cultures in pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning in multilingual contexts. Rather than showing linguistic deficit, translanguaging as illustrated above engenders ease of topic

delivery and consumption of content, which would otherwise be decontextualised and tedious if a monolingual approach was used. It is evident from the illustrations above that these learners and their teacher are capable of using either English or Xhosa only, but they seem more at home when the formal boundaries between languages are ignored. They are at home using lexemes and morphemes or whole chunks from the two or more languages as belonging to a linguistic repertoire or language practice

(García & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging allows learners and teachers alike to use words and phrases already familiar, and teachers to strategically tap into the learners' own life experiences, and home literacies and thus bringing the home knowledge into the classroom interaction (Canagarajah, 2001, 2011; García, 2014; García & Wei, 2014).

The classroom practice described in this article illustrates the kinds of classroom practices in other township schools in multilingual contexts of South Africa (see, for example, Banda, 2010; Makalela, 2015a, 2015b; Paxton, 2009; Setati, 1998; Setati & Adler, 2000; Setati et al., 2002). Teachers that allow learners' bilingual repertoire to be used in translanguaging style do it despite the language education policy in place. This observation was collaborated by teachers interviewed at the school and the principal. One teacher had this to say about the official language policy and the actual classroom practice.

Teacher: The medium of instruction here at X High School is English. But we are obliged to use isiXhosa because they [learners] do not only understand English.

This teacher is aware that the learners are familiar with both English and Xhosa (with varying degrees of proficiency in each). He added that teachers at the school use both languages at the same time for convenience, as this is also what the learners are used to in their daily lives. The school principal echoed this sentiment and added that using a combination of the two languages has led to pedagogical success.

Principal: The language policy is that the language of instruction obviously has been English, obviously, but obviously English and Xhosa, because we code switch here, we use both of them. It has been like that and it's still like that. We use English as a medium of instruction and Xhosa. It is a successful combination because when child thinks, he/ she thinks in Xhosa even if you dream in Xhosa.

Although the language education policy is that schools should use English as medium of instruction, issues related to proficiency in the target language as well as the multilingual context dictate that schools use both English and Xhosa. Classroom translanguaging is thus the inevitable consequence of the community language practices and learners' extended linguistic repertoire finding focus in pedagogical discourse.

Translanguaging as linguistic dispensation in pedagogic discourse

The regulative register dominates turns 1–6 and group discussions among learners. Translanguaging appears to be at its most intensity at this time in the sequence, which also appears to coincide with the Curriculum Initiation and overlapping with the Curriculum Collaboration stage. The use of English in more or less monoglot fashion is mostly found in instructional register, starting turn 8. This stage appears to lead from the Curriculum Collaboration to Curriculum Closure with the learners giving presentations and the teacher interventions by prompting for clarification and making “corrections” to the presentations before validating them. The overlapping second and third stages are done in monolingual English as a way to validate the goal of the lesson, that is, to enable learners do an English presentation on given topics. Since English is the target language, it is not surprising that the instructional register dominates these two stages. Overall, the sequenced selection of languages and linguistic forms in Xhosa and English appear designed to cater for the fact that the examinations are done in English.

In its original conceptualisation, Christie’s (1997) pedagogical macrogenres model works with a single language in English dominant contexts. Additionally, in monolingual pedagogic discourse actualisation of regulative and instructional registers is limited to a single language, for instance, English only. This does not have to be the case in multilingual contexts, where learners and teachers have the opportunity to deploy the extended linguistic repertoire in pedagogical discourse. For learners whose competence in English is weaker than their first language and where translanguaging is not allowed, learners might not demonstrate the knowledge and associated skills being taught just because the language used to regulate the discourse was not clear enough as to what was expected of them. I, however, posit that Christie’s pedagogical macrogenres model offers the tools to analyse pedagogic discourse in which two or more languages are used as media of instruction in a predictable manner especially in contexts where the learners have not yet acquired proficiency in the target language. Thus, the learners’ stronger language, in this case Xhosa and/ or translanguaged Xhosa/English forms, can be used to guide, pace and direct their behaviour while they target English language but their weaker language is used for practicing “content” until the learners have acquired sufficient proficiency in it, or in readiness for government examinations, which are in English.

I have shown that curriculum macrogenres (Christie, 2001, 2002, 2005), most notably, Curriculum Initiation “the beginning,” Curriculum Collaboration “the middle,” and Curriculum Closure “the end” pattern unfolded through various shifts and choices in languages. In the multilingual contexts, illustrated in this article, these shifts occur between/across two or more languages (rather than a shift in register in the same language as indicated in Christie’s studies). In terms of classroom interaction, developments within and between the stages are a function of negotiations between the learners and the teacher using two or more languages as linguistic resources.

I have also shown that the teacher used the regulative register to guide and direct the behaviour of the learners. Translanguaging, especially among the pedagogic subjects, was at its highest as the learners are being primed for the task ahead and as they, in turn, sought clarification about the task at hand and how to accomplish it. As Christie notes, the functions

of regulative register “will have been achieved, when at the end of a curriculum macrogenre, the subjects are enabled to do certain new things, where these are realised in instructional register choices” (Christie, 1997, p. 136). Besides, Christie suggests that where the language of the regulative register is focused, the directions towards the tasks the learners are to achieve will be correspondingly clear as learners receive unambiguous information about the steps to take to achieve those goals. Using an extended linguistic repertoire was critical in regulating and giving learners unambiguous information on the task at hand. This study showed how the teacher paced and directed the learners as they learnt how to go about their tasks while, where required, they sought clarification (the regulative register). At the same time, learners were being guided towards the “content,” or information they are to use in order to complete their tasks (the instructional register). It is the case that unlike in monolingual contexts, curriculum macrogenres and both registers are available to the learners under study in two languages, English and Xhosa. By allowing translanguaging, the teacher in the current study provided the learners access to knowledge through open choices, opportunities and options in the different languages. In essence, Christie’s formulation of instructive and regulative registers is made practicable through translanguaging, that is, strategic alternative use of Xhosa and English in the teaching–learning process.

Summary and conclusion

By using the extended linguistic repertoire, the learners and the teacher have come up with a new classroom discourse quite unlike one you would find in monolingual educational contexts. Note that the group discussion in Xhosa, English and hybrid language ensures that all learners participate in finding the solution to the task at hand, hence promoting collaborative learning. In communities where there are diminished chances of acquiring English naturally, this also provides peer-learning opportunity as the less proficient in English learn from the more proficient learners. In this regard, translanguaging reformulates the classroom as a space that enables agency through allowance of “multiplicity of voices (stances, perspectives, social lives)” (Heller, 2007, p. 8), which would otherwise remain unheard if strictly monolingual English classroom practices were allowed.

Translanguaged discourses provided the means through which learners consumed and produced cognitively demanding concepts without worrying about conforming to monoglot standard Xhosa or standard English. In that sense, it provided the transition and the scaffolding in which technical terms and concepts were framed to enable ease of recall, cognitive processing and access. As Baker observes:

To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another language, means that the subject matter has to be processed and “digested.” (Baker, 2011, p. 289)

In other words, the learners not only translated, they also reinterpreted knowledge across linguistic and cultural contexts. Translanguaging enabled the learners to unlock knowledge embedded in different linguistic and cultural-semiotic features embedded in their linguistic and related socio-semiotic repertoire.

Language policies need to consider the fact that the multilingual linguistic dispensation in Africa and elsewhere has enabled affordances of the complex linguistic and non-linguistic repertoires that could engender teaching and learning. As shown in this study, this multilingual linguistic dispensation (Aronin & Singleton, 2008) opens up new avenues of language use and learning, and engagement with cognitively demanding academic tasks. The linguistic repertoire can be used to access, produce and consume knowledge. There is need to explore “how these repertoires can be harnessed for transformative curriculum change in the teaching of disciplines” (Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013, p. 2). I am in agreement with Stroud and Kerfoot (2013, p. 2), who suggest a language policy development process that moves from micro-interaction to macro-structure and interrogation of what is currently seen as “legitimate” representational resources and conventions. This means questioning monoglot/monolingual formalised practices as a way to restructure institutional practices and policies that have informed language education models in multilingual Africa.

The current language education policy is at odds with the multilingual language practices in place as it is based on notions of linguistics of difference (García, 2007). Regardless of whether the language of education is the “mother tongue” (Xhosa) or English, the policy limits learners’ access to the extended linguistic repertoires that would enable them achieve power, voice and agency (Banda, 2010; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013). A comprehensive language in education policy needs to see the learners’ linguistic repertoires as material affordance in the promotion and pursuance of learning. Voice and not linguistic difference should be the starting point for pedagogical intercourse. This, according to Stroud and Kerfoot (2013), entails shifting focus from languages to linguistic repertoires, proficiency to practices and from code-switching to translanguaging. In this way, learners become agents of their own education, creators of knowledge and innovators of their own destinies. Translanguaging as classroom practice becomes transformative in that it mitigates if not levels the hegemonic effects of the social structuring of languages (Banda, 2010), and hence becomes a tool of social justice for marginalised African languages (cf. García & Leiva, 2014). This necessitates a drastic change in language education policy and classroom practice that places translanguaging at the centre of education. Otherwise, African languages will continue to be at the margins of classroom practice in Africa, with few learners able to fully participate in English monoglot/monolingual classroom practices.

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